

TESTIMONY BY CHARLES ALFANO BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC  
HEALTH, MONDAY FEBRUARY 26, 2007.

SUBJECT: PROPOSED SENATE BILL 190.

**AN ACT CONCERNING AN INCOME TAX DEDUCTION FOR EXPENSES  
ASSOCIATED WITH ORGAN DONATION.**

GOOD MORNING, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH. I'M TESTIFYING  
TODAY ON S.B. 190, AN ACT CONCERNING AN INCOME TAX DEDUCTION FOR EXPENSES  
ASSOCIATED WITH ORGAN DONATION.

IN 2007, THERE ARE 625 INDIVIDUALS WAITING FOR A KIDNEY OR LIVER TRANSPLANT  
IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT. WE DON'T KNOW HOW MANY WILL RECEIVE A NEW  
ORGAN. WE DO KNOW THAT SOME WILL DIE WAITING AND OTHERS WILL BE ADDED TO  
THE LIST. ALL OF THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE RELYING ON LIVING AND DECEASED ORGAN  
DONORS TO SAVE THEIR LIVES.

WE ARE FORTUNATE TODAY, WITH THE ADVANCES IN SCIENCE AND MEDICAL  
TECHNOLOGY TO BE ABLE TO SAFELY PERFORM TRANSPLANTED ORGAN OPERATIONS  
WITH A 99 % SUCCESS RATE. IN ADDITION THE ORGAN RETENTION RATE IS AS HIGH AS 97  
TO 98 % AFTER THE FIRST YEAR. UNFORTUNATELY FOR ME, I BECAME PART OF THE 2 TO  
3 % OF TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS WHOSE NEW KIDNEY REJECTED.

MY STORY BEGINS IN LATE 2000, WHEN I WAS TOLD THAT MY KIDNEYS WERE FAILING  
AND I WOULD HAVE TO HAVE A TRANSPLANT. TYPICALLY, I WOULD BE PLACED ON A  
WAITING LIST FOR AN ORGAN FROM A DECEASED ORGAN DONOR. HOWEVER, IN MY  
SITUATION I WAS FORTUNATE TO HAVE A NUMBER OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY WHO CAME  
FORWARD AND OFFERED TO BE TESTED TO SEE IF THEY WERE A MATCH. I RECEIVED A

PHONE CALL FROM A WOMAN I KNEW FROM SERVING ON A BOARD WITH HER. SHE INDICATED THAT SHE AND HER HUSBAND WOULD LIKE TO BE TESTED TO SEE IF THEY WERE SUITABLE CANDIDATES TO BE DONORS FOR ME. I HAD NEVER MET HER HUSBAND BEFORE THIS PHONE CALL. IT TURNS OUT THAT THEY WERE BOTH MATCHES FOR ME. HE (BEN) DECIDED TO PROCEED AND ON APRIL 4, 2001 I HAD A SUCCESSFUL KIDNEY TRANSPLANT. BEN WASN'T AS LUCKY. HE DEVELOPED AN INFECTION AND HAD TO STAY IN THE HOSPITAL A WEEK LONGER WHICH ALSO MEANT THAT HE HAD TO EXTEND HIS MEDICAL LEAVE FROM WORK. BEN WORKED FOR A MAJOR ACCOUNTING FIRM AT THE TIME. HE WAS TOLD THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO USE VACATION AND SICK TIME IN ORDER TO TAKE A LEAVE AND IF THAT DIDN'T COVER IT HE WOULD NOT BE PAID FOR THE ADDITIONAL TIME. WELL, BEN MANAGED FOR THE TRADITIONAL SIX WEEKS THAT HE WAS OUT OF WORK. HE RETURNED TO WORK AND 30 DAYS LATER THE COMPANY DID A DOWNSIZING AND BEN LOST HIS JOB. BEN SPENT A GOOD PART OF A YEAR LOOKING FOR WORK, TO NO AVAIL. HE ALSO HAD TO SELL HIS HOUSE AND MOVE IN WITH HIS SON. TODAY, BEN AND HIS WIFE LIZ ARE MISSIONARIES IN SOUTH KOREA, AWAITING THE FALL OF NORTH KOREA.

THE REMAINDER OF 2001, WAS DIFFICULT FOR ME, IN THAT MY NEWLY TRANSPLANTED KIDNEY WAS NOT FUNCTIONING PROPERLY. IN JANUARY 2002, I LOST MY KIDNEY AND BEGAN A REGIMIN OF AT HOME DIALYSIS TREATMENT. IN MARCH OF 2002 MY SISTER APPROACHED ME AND SAID THAT SHE WANTED TO GIVE ME A KIDNEY. SHE PREVIOUSLY HAD OFFERED BUT DUE TO A HEALTH PROBLEM AT THE TIME SHE COULD NOT. ON JUNE 14, 2002, I AGAIN RECEIVED A SUCCESSFUL TRANSPLANT, THANKS TO MY SISTER. MY SISTERS RECOVERY WENT WELL AND SHE RETURNED TO WORK SIX WEEKS LATER. IN HER CASE, HER EMPLOYER WENT BEYOND KINDNESS. HER EMPLOYER PAID HER FOR THE FULL SIX WEEKS AND GAVE HER AN EXTRA TWO WEEKS VACATION. TODAY, NEARLY FIVE YEARS LATER, I'M IN VERY GOOD HEALTH WITH A STRONG KIDNEY. IF IT HADN'T

BEEN FOR A GOOD SAMARITAN AND A FAMILY MEMBER , I MAY VERY WELL HAVE NOT SURVIVED.

AS, YOU CAN SEE TWO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE SAME INTENTIONS HAD TWO VERY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES. I SPEAK VIA EMAIL TO BEN QUITE OFTEN. AMAZINGLY, HE IS NOT BITTER ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE, RATHER HE SEES IT AS A OPPORTUNITY THAT ALLOWED HIM TO FIND HIS PURPOSE IN LIFE. BEN SUFFERED SERIOUS FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS AS A RESULT OF HIS GIFT OF LIFE TO ME. IF SB 190 HAD BEEN ENACTED INTO LAW FIVE YEARS AGO, IT WOULD HAVE HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON HIS FINANCIAL SITUATION.

THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE IN CONNECTICUT AND THROUGHOUT THE U.S. WHO ARE JUST WAITING FOR A GOOD SAMARITAN TO COME THEIR WAY.

THERE ARE SIXTEEN STATES THAT HAVE PASSED OR ARE CONSIDERING PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION TO GIVE ORGAN DONORS UP TO A \$10,000 TAX DEDUCTION ON THEIR STATE INCOME TAXES. THE STATE OF WISCONSIN HAS PASSED LEGISLATION THAT NOT ONLY ALLOWS A \$10,000. TAX DEDUCTION, BUT ALSO ALLOWS FOR A PAID LEAVE OF ABSENCE. WISCONSIN OFFICIALS AND SUPPORTORS SAY THAT THIS LEGISLATION IS THE MOST AMBITIOUS STEP BY A STATE GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE TRANSPLANTS. ALREADY WISCONSIN HAS SEEN A 25 % INCREASE IN ORGAN DONOR REGISTRATIONS. OTHER STATES THAT HAVE LAWS ON THE BOOKS ARE ARKANSAS, GEORGIA, IDAHO, IOWA, MINNESOTA, UTAH AND NORTH DAKOTA.

WE ARE A NATION OF PEOPLE WHO LOVE UNDERDOGS AND IDOLIZE HEROS. THE PASSAGE OF SB 190 CAN BE A BIG STEP TOWARDS HONORING HEROS LIKE BEN AND MY SISTER AND SO MANY OTHERS WHO HAVE COME FORWARD UNSELFISHLY AND HAVE GIVEN THE GIFT OF LIFE.

I THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION OF SB 190 ON BEHALF OF MYSELF AND THE 625 PEOPLE WAITING FOR A GOOD SAMARITAN.